

## BAHAMAS AND TURKS AND CAICOS SPRING 2015 BIRD REPORT

### INTRODUCTION

There was a drought in the southern Bahamas this spring. Lack of reporting prevents an overall assessment of its impact on the birds. However, the fact that the flamingos on Great Inagua did not breed may be attributable to the lack of rainfall. Island firsts include Gadwall for Great Bahama and Pearly-eyed Thrasher for Abaco. A ruff was a very good find.

### WATERFOWL TO TERNS

A lone Black-bellied Whistling-Duck was at Reef G. C., Grand Bahama 1 May (EG), and 6 were at Maillis Farm, Adelaide, New Providence 13 May (PM). A Canada Goose present since November 2015 remained at Treasure Cay G. C., Abaco through the spring (EB, m. ob.); another was found on the Providenciales G. C. 3 May after 4 days of strong northwest winds (COS ph). This is the first report of a Canada Goose from Turks & Caicos in over 20 years. An **Egyptian Goose** was on western Grand Bahama 7-14 May (LBC ph., EG). No local source for this bird could be found, raising the question whether it should be considered an escaped exotic or a vagrant from the established Florida population. Two Gadwalls were at Robert's Nursery, Treasure Cay, Abaco 1 Mar (EB), and two at Bootle Bay 9 Apr were the first for Grand Bahama (EG, m.ob. ph). Over 1000 American Flamingos were at Flamingo Pond, North Caicos 27 May (TT). The wardens at Great Inagua National Park, Bahamas reported that large numbers of American Flamingos were present this spring, but the birds did not breed (HN, RB, fide LG). The wardens checked the interior of Lake Rosa and found no evidence of nesting or of abandoned nesting sites. The absence of nesting this year is probably attributable to drought and low water on Lake Rosa.

Bracey saw 2 Black-capped Petrels, 4 Great Shearwaters and 50 Audubon's Shearwaters 19 Mar and 5 Cory's Shearwaters, 3 Great Shearwaters, 7 Audubon's Shearwaters, and a Wilson's Storm-Petrel 28 May from sport-fishing boats east of Abaco. White-tailed Tropicbirds were already flying around Conception I. National Park, Bahamas 8 Mar (J&AG). Single Masked Boobies 16 and 19 Mar and a Northern Gannet 19 Mar were reported in Turks and Caicos waters from a cruise ship (RM, GJ). Over 100 Brown Boobies were nesting on Booby Rocks, Mayaguana 21 Mar (BCNP). The lone Anhinga in the Bahamas was seen throughout the period at Reef G. C., Grand Bahama (EG, m. ob.). Nineteen white morph Reddish Egrets were found on Mayaguana 20-23 Mar (BCNP). A Roseate Spoonbill was at Maillis Pond, Adelaide, New Providence 12 May (PM, CW, GS), one at Calabash Bay, North Andros 13 May (CW, GS), and three in the Marls nw of Cooper's Town, Abaco 31 May (EB). Twenty-five spoonbills were around the dykes at Morton Salt Ponds, Great Inagua 25 Apr (LG).

Two Swallow-tailed Kites were seen north of Cooper's Town, Abaco 22 Mar (JW, AH), and one was over Treasure Cay the next day (EB). Single Purple Gallinules were at Emerald and Ruby Golf Courses, Grand Bahama 19 Mar and Emerald G.C. 9 May (EG, m. ob.). An Upland Sandpiper was seen at Mathewtown, Great Inagua 4 May (MM, PMc, NM, LF, RB ph). A female **Ruff** (Reeve) was a great find at the chicken farm, Freeport, Grand Bahama 27, 28 Apr (EG, DM ph.). A high count of 76 Dunlin at Green Turtle Cay, Abaco 1 Apr was remarkable (EB, J&KK, E&MR). Single Pomarine Jaegers were seen off North Abaco

27 Mar (MK, RK) and Great Guana Cay, Abaco 28 May (EB). A Bonaparte's Gull was at West End, Grand Bahama 9 Apr (EG ph., m. ob.). There were 20 reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls from the Bahamas this spring with a high count of 12 from Cooper's Town, Abaco 18 Feb (EB). Great Black-backed Gulls were scarce; 7 reports from Paradise I., New Providence, Grand Bahama, Green Turtle Cay and Castaway Cay, Abaco probably reflected only 5 birds. Forty-two Least Terns were counted at Discovery Beach, Grand Bahama 14 May (EG). Forty Roseate Terns were seen in the Sea of Abaco between Treasure Cay and Whale Cay 16 May (EB). Single Forster's Terns, uncommon in the Bahamas, were seen at West End, Grand Bahama 30 Apr (EG CT) and near Treasure Cay, Abaco Feb 1 and 13 (EB, D&JL, P&CD). Sixty Sandwich Terns were observed from the ferry between North and South Bimini 17 Apr (EG). A Key West Quail-Dove at Orange Creek, Cat I. 5 Apr was a good find (AH). Yellow-billed Cuckoos were reported from Gilpin Pt., Abaco 15 May (SG), Shannon Pond, Freeport, Grand Bahama 26 May (EG, JR), and Crossing Rocks, Abaco 30 May (RP). The Bird Club of New Providence found 17 Smooth-billed Anis on Mayaguana Mar 20-23, whereas none were seen there during a visit in Mar 2006.

### **BARN OWL TO MUNIA**

A Barn Owl was at Sunken Blue Hole, Abaco 22 Apr (EB, MR), and two were calling at Coral Harbour, New Providence 5-8 May (CW). It is not known whether Burrowing Owls still nest on New Providence, so one seen 8 Apr along Coral Harbour Rd. at the eastern end of Lynden Pindling Airport was noteworthy (PtM JL). The earliest reported Antillean Nighthawk in the Bahamas was at Coral Harbour 19 Apr (CW). Gates reported a Ruby-throated Hummingbird at Garden of the Groves, Grand Bahama 8 Apr, and one visited Bracey's feeder in Treasure Cay, Abaco 11 Apr. American Kestrels, both light and dark morphs, were abundant on Mayaguana 20-23 Mar (BCNP ph.). There were 7 reports of Peregrine Falcons in the Bahamas this spring from Abaco, Grand Bahama and San Salvador (m. ob.).

The earliest reports of Gray Kingbird from the Bahamas were kingbirds heard at Coral Harbour, New Providence 7 Mar (CW) and 3 seen on Crooked and Acklins Is. during 6 days around 21 Mar (MB). Single White-eyed Vireos were reported from the citrus farm near Treasure Cay, Abaco 1 Mar (EB) and Gates's garden in Freeport 19 Mar (EG). A Cliff Swallow at Treasure Cay 29 Apr was unexpected (EB). A Veery was at Angel Fish Pt., Abaco 2 May (EB), and a Hermit Thrush at The Retreat, Nassau 23-25 Mar (TW, BH, EC). An American Robin was at Robert's Nursery 23 Mar (RS). Visiting birders discovered a Pearly-eyed Thrasher at Treasure Cay, Abaco 21 Mar (EGr, JG, EB ph.). It stayed through the spring. This is the first report for Abaco and one of a few from the Northern Bahamas.

Eight Ovenbirds on Staniel Cay, Exumas 2 May was a good count (BP). A Blue-winged Warbler was at Robert's Nursery, Treasure Cay 26 Feb (EGr). An Orange-crowned Warbler was at Gerace Research Center, San Salvador 1 Mar (NA). Single Nashville Warblers were at Jake Jones Rd., San Salvador 2 Mar (NA), Little Lake, San Salvador 16 Mar (GL, VL), and The Retreat, Nassau 17 Mar (MB, JB). A research team spent 3 weeks on Abaco looking for Kirtland's Warblers and only found 4, all on 14 Mar along the Hole-in-the-Wall Rd., south of the pine forest. Bracey also found the 4 warblers the next day (EB, K&SS, BB). The same team found 47 Kirtland's on Cat I. 5-11 Apr (DE, JW, AH). Single Kirtland's Warblers were seen at Gerace Research Center, San Salvador 13 Mar (GL) and central Eleuthera 31 Mar (JA). Chretien reported a fall-out of Blackburnian Warblers on

Great Stirrup Cay 22 Apr, a very rainy day (GC, fide CW); a single Blackburnian was in Freeport 2 May (MC). A Chestnut-sided Warbler was in Mathewtown, Great Inagua 7 May, and a Bay-breasted Warbler was there 7, 8 May (RB, HC, TB, CB, TL, LF, LS, MM).

Single Scarlet Tanagers were seen near Mathewtown, Great Inagua 27, 28 Apr (NM VM), at Freeport, Grand Bahama 1 May (EG), and Little Stirrup Cay, Berry Is. 8 May (E&JF). Bobolinks made a good showing on Grand Bahama with high counts of 80 on 30 Apr (CT DM) and 72 on 1 May (EG). A Brown-headed Cowbird was at Treasure Cay, Abaco 8 Mar; Shiny Cowbirds were reported from Grand Bahama, Andros, and New Providence. Single Baltimore Orioles were at Treasure Cay, Abaco (CWe) and Mathewtown, Great Inagua both on 4 May (LF RB NM). A **Scaly-breasted Munia** (formerly Nutmeg Mannikin) was seen on Banks Rd., Eleuthera 28 Mar (JA). This species is resident on Hispaniola and Puerto Rico and has been reported from Turks & Caicos and Great Inagua.

#### **OBSERVERS:**

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